



December 18, 2018

RE: Senate Bill 1145

Dear House Committee on Tourism and Recreation

Dear Representatives:

On behalf of the Greater Munising Bay Partnership, the Alger County Chamber of Commerce and the Munising Downtown Development Authority, I would like to express wholehearted support of Senate Bill 1145. This bill repeals the 55-year-old prohibition on commercial fishing operations from taking lake trout in trap nets on Lake Superior.

Our office, along with being the Chamber of Commerce for the county and the Munising DDA, is the economic development office for the county. It is widely known that tourism is a huge economic driver for our economy. In fact, this is our county's largest economic driver with estimates are over \$35 million and growing yearly.

When tourists visit Munising, one of the most frequent questions (we also operate the visitors center downtown), is where to buy or eat fish that was caught in Lake Superior. Our most popular commercial fishing operation, VanLandschoots & Sons, which has been in our community for 106 years and is a local staple to our community, provides fresh whitefish to most of the local restaurants (and regionally) and local retail outlets.

Though Lake Superior whitefish is the most "well-known", many people, both tourists and locals, would like to be able to purchase Lake Superior lake trout. Currently, they are not able to net lake trout. In addition, if those fish end up in their nets, they must throw them back and in many occasions the fish are either injured or dead, ending up being wasted.

During the 1960's era, lake trout were a species that had been depleted due to over fishing and the sea lamprey. The situation has now drastically changed. According to the Minnesota's Don Pereira, Chief of DNR Fisheries and U.S. commissioner to the international Great Lakes Fishery Commission, was quoted as saying in 2017, "Lake trout rehabilitation in Lake Superior is a major success story for the Great Lakes".

Currently, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Canada all allow for commercial fishing of Lake Superior lake trout. There are a very limited number of commercial fishing operations in Michigan that fish on Lake Superior, so the quantity of lake trout harvested would be minimal.

We are anxious to see this bill proceed with approval in the Michigan House of Representatives and approved by the governor's office. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. We appreciate your time and effort in this initiative.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Reynolds, Ph.D.,
Executive Director
Greater Munising Bay Partnership/Alger Co. Chamber &
Munising DDA